



CUSTER  
COUNTRY  
MARKETING  
PLAN

2009

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Strengths and Weaknesses</b>	<b>3-7</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ties to the Strategic Plan</b>	<b>9-11</b>
<b>Target Demographics</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>Marketing Methods</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>2009 Budget</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b><u>PROJECT APPLICATIONS</u></b>	
<b>Loop Tour Map reprint</b>	<b>16-17</b>
<b>SuperHost</b>	<b>18-19</b>
<b>Consumer Advertising</b>	<b>20-22</b>
<b>Publications: Custer Country Vacation Guide</b>	<b>23-26</b>
<b>E-newsletter</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Internet Site Design and Maintenance</b>	<b>28-29</b>
<b>Telemarketing and Fulfillment</b>	<b>30-31</b>
<b>Publicity/PR</b>	<b>32-34</b>
<b>FAMs</b>	<b>35-36</b>
<b>Warrior Trail</b>	<b>37-39</b>
<b>Marketing Plan Retreat</b>	<b>40-42</b>
<b>VIC Assistance</b>	<b>43-44</b>
<b>Billboards</b>	<b>45-46</b>
<b>Trade Shows</b>	<b>47-48</b>

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this marketing plan is to fulfill the mission of Custer Country Montana, Inc., which is “to promote economic development of the region through tourism.” This goal will be met through communicating the attractions, towns and events of interest to the traveling public. Custer Country is comprised of 13 counties and two Indian Reservations in southeast Montana. This creates a diverse array of attractions and activities for visitors to participate in. It is, therefore, Custer Country’s continuing mission to help communities and tourism organizations large and small to enhance their image and awareness to the traveling public.

## **GEOGRAPHIC AREA**

Custer Country includes the following 13 counties: Carter, Fallon, Wibaux, Dawson, Custer, Rosebud, Prairie, Yellowstone, Treasure, Big Horn, Golden Valley, Powder River and Musselshell. It also includes the Crow and Cheyenne Reservations.

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CUSTER COUNTRY**

### **STRENGTHS**

Custer Country’s strengths are many, beginning with its location, varying scenic beauty and its people, who are eager to share the Montana experience with visitors. Specifically, our strengths are:

1. **The changing landscape.** Custer Country consists of badlands, flatlands and highlands. The badlands cover the eastern and northern sectors and include the cities of Wibaux, Glendive, Terry, Ekalaka and Baker. These unusual sandstone formations make for interesting subjects and backdrops for photographers, bird and wildlife observers and those who want to more deeply appreciate the effects of nature over time on these soft, ever-changing formations. The semi-arid region is home to countless species, including the buzzards that make their much-anticipated annual return to Glendive.

The prairies of Forsyth, Hysham, Custer and Huntley are known for their fertile soil and ability to sustain many types of agricultural crops, from wheat and barley to hay, grasses, safflower, sugar beets and oats. In addition, these flat lands are ideal for grazing cattle, horses and sheep, as well as the antelope, deer and elk that thrive in the region.

Custer Country is home to three mountain ranges which include the Bull Mountains near Roundup and the Pryors and Bighorns near Ft. Smith. While not as well-known as the majestic Rockies, these ranges offer a wide array of wildlife, vegetation and changing scenery. Birds from tiny finches to Golden and Bald Eagles abound in these mountains, as well as in the entire region.

2. **Our Rivers and streams.** Custer Country is traversed by five rivers: the Yellowstone, the Missouri, the Tongue, the Powder and the Bighorn. These rivers, known world-wide for their excellent ability to support species such as trout, ling, catfish, sturgeon and

paddlefish, are fed by countless creeks and streams that support diverse species of fish and birds, such as Canadian geese, pelicans, ducks of all kinds, cranes and aquatic mammals. These rivers and streams lead into or have created reservoirs, lakes and dams that create opportunities for boating, canoeing, skiing, fishing, hunting and photography that are recognized around the world.

The Big Horn River and Big Horn Canyon reservoir attract anglers from across the country and many foreign countries who know it for its abundance of trophy fish. The Yellowstone River is one of only a few places in the world where the pre-historic paddlefish can be found and brings tourists from diverse areas of the country to try their hands at this entertaining pursuit. Tongue River Reservoir State Park, in the southern portion of Custer Country, attracts more fisher-men and -women each year, and yields pike, trout, bass, and many species of pan fish.

**3. Paleontological and geological attractions.** Custer Country is one of the world's most popular areas for paleontologists, dinosaur enthusiasts and geology hobbyists and professionals from around the world. In the summer, at any given time, there are no less than three teams of paleontologists from leading universities, museums and research institutes conducting digs in Custer Country. The region has produced some of the first and most famous paleontological specimens ever discovered, and continues to yield additional "firsts" every year.

Together with Travel Montana, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, three other tourism regions and 15 locations around the state, Custer Country has helped publicize the Montana Dinosaur Trail and produce and distribute a 4-color brochure that is distributed at trade Shows, hotels, restaurants and other facilities and individuals around the country and to many foreign countries. Custer Country boasts three facilities on the Dinosaur Trail, two in Glendive and one in Ekalaka. In addition, three new businesses in the Glendive area are now offering opportunities for families and individuals to participate in fossil hunts, which are sure to create economic rewards for the community.

Agate hunters are attracted to Custer Country to scout for the unique geological anomalies that can only be found in the free-flowing Yellowstone River.

**4. Interstate highways 90 and 94.** These four-lane federal highways traverse Custer Country westward from Wibaux and southeasterly from Billings to the Wyoming state line. A majority of our visitors use these two major highways to either enter or leave the region, and are favored by those who have limited time to spend in Custer Country. Many of Custer Country's small towns lie along the interstates and are easily accessed by travelers in search of food, lodging, gas, souvenirs and adventure.

**5. Native American and Western history.** Our region gets its name from one of the most famous military men in world history: Lt. Col. George Custer. The name conjures up images of his military exploits and the stunning victory that a united group of Indian tribes attained on June 25, 1876. It is certainly one of the most controversial and famous battles in military history. 2008 marks the 132nd anniversary of the battle. Custer Country is a magnet for military, Native American and western history buffs. The two re-enactments of the battle that take place near Hardin, MT around the annual anniversary continue to grow in popularity each year, and bring economic benefit not only to Hardin, but also to communities along the routes that visitors take. Given the wide area attendees travel from, the impact from these visitors can be felt in regions other than Custer Country. In addition to the battle re-enactments, there is the Crow Fair, Cheyenne Days, Chief Plenty Coups State Park, Rosebud Battlefield and other activities that cater to and interest history enthusiasts.

One of the most popular activities is the annual Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, bringing thousands of out-of-state visitors to Custer Country each year. The event creates a carnival-like atmosphere which guarantees positive word-of-mouth advertising drawing new and return visitors each year.

**6. Montana's largest city.** Billings has reached a population of 100,000 people, and has the busiest airport in the state. As a regional center of commerce, Billings draws many thousands of visitors each year, many of whom use the city as a stepping-off point to visit Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, ski areas in Red Lodge and Big Sky, and the historic areas of Custer Country. Billings' contribution to travel in Custer Country and Montana travel cannot be understated.

**7. Custer Country's smaller communities.** Not counting Billings, Custer Country can count only a few cities of over 2500 people. Nonetheless, these small communities are often the sites of festivals, parades, country fairs and rodeos that offer diversity to the traveler. This is not to mention the museums and old-west-style buildings that are still parts of the Main Streets of these small towns. There are unique collections of art and one-of-a kind items in these museums that often lead to an expanded knowledge and understanding of what life was, and very often still is like in our part of the world. From world-famous dinosaur skeletons such as the Anatotitan copei that was discovered, unearthed and reconstructed by enthusiastic amateur paleontologists in the small town of Ekalaka, to the Yucca Theater in Hysham, there are interesting and wonder-inspiring sights throughout the region. The residents of these small communities are eager to welcome visitors to their towns and to tell stories from local history. This willingness to share their histories has been documented by ITRR studies for such programs as CTAP and their "Niche News" briefs.

**8. Clean air, clear skies and open spaces.** Like most of Montana, we are blessed with clear, clean air and beautiful, endless skies. Visitors are often in awe of the things we take for granted, and we try to use it to our advantage by including pictures of our open, hilly country in our consumer ads and other promotional pieces.

**9. ZooMontana.** Custer Country is proud to boast the only public zoo in Montana. In its short history, it has gained a reputation as a first-quality facility for year-round use. Unfortunately, they have a limited budget for promotion and advertising. Through co-op marketing and other means, Custer Country will continue to support the growth and expansion of this unique facility through publicity.

**10. Museums and Art Centers.** Custer Country has many fine museums, including the Yellowstone Art Museum, the Custer County Art and History Center, the Yellowstone County Museum and many other smaller facilities. At Custer Country, we encourage these institutions to take advantage of our programs to help them publicize their events and programs. With the increasing interest in Cultural Tourism, these are important assets to Custer Country.

**11. State Parks.** Custer Country is home to several State Parks, including Makoshika State Park, the largest in the FWP system, and Medicine Rocks State Park, one of the most unique. Also in the region, travelers will find Pictograph State Park, Lake Elmo, Tongue River Reservoir State Park, Plenty Coups State Park, Rosebud Battlefield and several FWP-maintained fishing accesses and smaller reservoirs. These offer countless opportunities for camping, fishing, boating, hiking, photography and wildlife watching. Custer Country works closely with FWP, including membership on the Region 7 Citizens Advisory Committee, which was formed to help identify and respond to community concerns about recreation and other activities on FWP lands.

**12. Clark on the Yellowstone History.** Because Pompeys Pillar is the only place along the Lewis and Clark trail where physical evidence of the journey still remains in its original state along the trail, expectations are high that visits to Pompeys Pillar National Monument, where Capt. William Clark carved his name on the 100-foot high sandstone outcropping, will continue as a result of the publicity gained from the Signature Event that took place there in July, 2006. We will continue to publicize the region's historic importance to the rest of the world.

## **WEAKNESSES**

**1. Perceptions.** Many visitors are burdened with the mistaken impression that all of Montana looks like Glacier or Yellowstone National Parks. While these two world-famous National Parks are a definite draw to Montana, the images potential visitors see of them don't prepare them for the equally beautiful landscapes that can be found in the eastern portions of the state. Indeed, visitors often are awe-stricken by the colorful geological formations and the sandstone faces and figures that seem to have been carved in the sandstone hills of Custer Country.

**2. Need for improved two-lane roads.** While we are grateful for the progress the Montana Department of Transportation has made on such roads as Highway 323 in the extreme southeastern portion of Custer Country, Highway 253 from Terry to Brockway and Highway 212 from Crow Agency to Alzada, many of the 950 miles of two-lane roads in Custer Country are in need of repaving, straightening and/or wider shoulders to ensure the safety of those increasing numbers of travelers who prefer getting off the interstates. Furthermore, because improvements have, in many cases, been so long in coming, our reputation for questionable roadways still precedes us. We are hopeful that the continuing improvement of federal, state and county roads will help to improve that reputation.

**3. Lack of understanding of the region's historic importance.** Many people are unaware of the important role Custer Country has played in U.S. history. Beginning with its acquisition in the Louisiana Purchase to the importance of the Battle of the Little Big Horn and continuing today with the role the region plays in filling the energy needs of the Nation, Custer Country's impact on history is largely unknown or misunderstood.

Even those who claim to know American History are sometimes unaware of the extent of Capt. William Clark's exploration and research in the Yellowstone Valley during the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806. Custer Country has expended considerable time and funds into helping to publicize its importance in this historic trek.

**4. Lack of public transportation.** While Custer Country has one major airport at Billings, air and ground transportation are lacking in the region. Only the cities of Billings, Miles City and Glendive have commercial air service, train service is limited to freight and busses only run along I-94 on a very limited schedule. Taxi service and car rental are many times unavailable to visitors. While these are regional and national problems that Custer Country cannot solve alone, they are important factors to potential travelers when they are planning conventions or meetings for which Custer Country is being considered and otherwise equipped to host.

**5. Misunderstanding of the recreational opportunities in Custer Country.** There is a misconception among some sportsmen that hunting and fishing areas are over-crowded or inaccessible. This attitude is caused by limited problems that have been experienced by a few, but which have little basis in fact. The Big Horn River, known as a Blue-Ribbon trout stream does, indeed, get congested sometimes, but usually creates ample opportunities for serious anglers. The Big Horn is also the subject of a two-state battle over stream flows controlled by the Yellowtail Dam near Ft. Smith. However, Tongue River Reservoir, the Yellowstone River, Bighorn Canyon and smaller bodies of water like Sandstone Reservoir and Baker Lake offer great opportunities but have yet to be discovered by many.

Hunting access is becoming problematic, as well, with the increasing number of properties being bought by out-of-state buyers and then closed to recreational activities. (The recent acquisition of previously privately-held land in Custer Country by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation should help provide new recreational and hunting opportunities, however.) These properties are sometimes adjacent to public lands that are only accessible through these private tracts, causing many of the public areas to be closed to such activities. While programs like Block Management and easement purchases are helping to stave off these problems to some degree, they are going to continue to need constant monitoring and remediation.

**6. Lack of adequate camping and lodging facilities in smaller communities.** Many small communities in Custer Country, such as Wibaux, Custer and Plevna have limited or no facilities for camping or overnight lodging. Others have not publicized the existence of such facilities due to a lack of understanding of the importance of advertising and participating in promotions.

**7. Lack of understanding of tourism regions.** A large sector of Montana citizens, as well as most out-of-state residents, are unfamiliar with the existence or geographic boundaries of tourism regions, or the role of state supported VICs or CVBs. This lack of understanding prevents residents of the region from developing a sense of cohesiveness that could develop into a clearer vision for the region as a whole.

**8. Distances between rest areas.** Highway rest areas are important to travelers, but the spacing and placement of rest areas in Custer Country is inconsistent and oftentimes not near areas where travelers can access other services. Additionally, the rest areas are only seasonally operated, extending the distance between operable rest areas in the winter and early spring.

**9. Lack of community awareness of tourism's importance.** There are members of County Commissions, City Councils, Chambers of Commerce and the Montana Legislature who are reluctant to accept the message that tourism is important not only to the state but to small communities. This attitude is slowly changing, but the message needs to be repeated each time a new commission, council or legislative representative is elected. Additionally, the very businesses that most benefit from tourism, such as restaurants, gas/convenience stores and retail stores are many times least aware of the importance of out-of-town and non-resident patrons.

**10. Lack of directional and informational signage.** Many of the historical sites in Custer Country are under-advertised due to Federal and State Laws and unavailability of appropriate places for billboards.

## **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
2. To provide economic benefit from tourism to the cities, towns, businesses and non-profit agencies in Custer Country and Montana. This will include aiding in the creation of more and better-paying jobs in tourism through increased tourism.
3. To assist towns, cities, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include cooperative marketing programs, VIC assistance, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.
5. To educate the general public, including those who live in Custer Country, about the structure and importance of tourism regions in Montana, and the economic impact tourism and recreation have on the state.
6. To work with local and state government agencies to help improve existing tourism infrastructure and work on planning new visitor destinations and attractions within the Custer Country region. These will include advice on placement and promotion of camp sites, motels and recreational facilities and rest areas.
7. To enhance the experiences of visitors by providing training for front-line employees in Custer Country through Super Host and other programs that teach front-line personnel how to inform and serve tourists.
8. To promote the historical significance of the region, especially the history and legend of George Custer and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the Clark on the Yellowstone Trail.
9. To encourage Custer Country visitors to visit the smaller towns and participate in the local events of these smaller towns that they haven't been to before.
10. To encourage travelers to increase their total time in Custer Country, thereby creating a greater economic impact on the region.
11. To have a strong internet presence and to keep the information on it current and entertaining.
12. To work cooperatively with other CVBs and Tourism Regions, State and Federal agencies and through public/private partnerships.
13. To publish and promote the newly-created Warrior Trail through cooperation with the communities lying along the trail and the State of South Dakota, who will soon consider extending the trail into that state.
14. Use regionalized maps and signs to aid travelers in finding the attractions and sites in Custer Country.
15. Endorse and support the Travel Montana/National Geographic Tourism Charter.

## **THE MARKETING PLAN'S TIES TO THE 2008-2013 STRATEGIC PLAN.**

Custer Country's marketing plan is designed to adhere to both the spirit and the letter of the new 5-year strategic plan. Many of the elements of the Strategic Plan are included in the previously-outlined purpose and goals of Custer Country. Specifically the provisions of the Strategic Plan we will implement are:

❖ **Goal 1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**

1.1a- Expand partnerships with tourism businesses/attractions as co-op partners..

1.1c- Attend consumer travel shows targeting high value, low impact visitors.

1.1d- Continue marketing to international travelers

1.1e- Enhance tracking/reporting and ROI from state, regional, and CVB advertising.

1.2d- Target travel media to increase visibility of MT as a leisure travel destination.

1.3a- Host an annual marketing plan meeting to coordinate the marketing planning process.

1.3b- Implement the new Montana tourism brand.

1.3c- Conduct educational tourism workshops, presentations, and webinars.

1.4b- Establish criteria for officially-designated visitor information sites statewide.

1.4c- Provide advanced training for all VICs, including regional familiarization tours.

1.4d- Use technology to enhance visitor information and marketing efforts.

1.4e- Expand displays of MT destination/products at all visitor locations statewide.

❖ **Goal 2: Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation.**

❖ **Goal 3: Address management and access issues for sustainable recreation on private, state, and federal lands.**

❖ **Goal 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history (historic sites, museum, art, music, etc.)**

4.1a- Use historic/cultural attractions as venues for conferences, events and seminars.

❖ **Goal 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services for target customer markets.**

5.1c- Encourage use of Made/Grown in MT products by restaurants, markets, retailers, etc.

5.2a- Distribute assistance information via tourism meetings, web sited, newsletters, etc.

❖ **Goal 9: Increase funding to maintain sustainable tourism and recreation.**

9.1- Seek increases in state funding for targeted tourism marketing/programs/facilities.

9.2- Foster opportunities to pool public and private marketing dollars.

9.3- Enhance funding for region and CVB marketing efforts.

❖ **Goal 10: Build an effective “team” to implement the Strategic Plan and report results.**

10.2- Create public/private/tribal partnerships for cooperative project implementation.

10.4- Streamline reporting process of marketing plans/expenditures to TAC/TM by regions & CVBs.

## **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
2. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.
3. Increase web “hits” by 25%.
4. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.
5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.
6. Increase the value of press coverage to \$50000, through advertorial and editorial submissions to regional and national publications.
7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.

## **TARGET GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS.**

The geographic markets we have targeted are chosen on the basis of encouraging continued visitation from those areas that have traditionally shown interest in visiting or re-visiting the region, information gathered by ITRR and inquiry reports from our fulfillment agent. Past experience shows us that the states from which our inquiries are received are almost identical to the states the majority of our businesses come from. In addition, we are seeing increased visitors from Canada. The areas targeted will be:

- The Midwestern states of Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota (particularly Minneapolis and St. Paul), Wisconsin, and North and South Dakota. These states consistently appear in the top ten inquiry statistics for Custer Country.
- Texas, Colorado and Wyoming (especially Cody.)
- California, Florida, Washington (Seattle area) and Oregon (Portland).
- Other states, especially along the eastern seaboard, when economical, high visibility opportunities arise.

- Canada and the European countries of Germany, England, France, Italy and The Netherlands, where interest in Custer and Western history is particularly keen.

## **TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS**

Our target demographics are based upon 2005 ITRR statistics for non-resident visitors to Custer Country, inquiry statistics and successful ad campaigns from previous years. We have targeted five major demographic groups as follows:

- **A. Leisure Travelers- primary 25 – 75 years old**

1. Travel by car
2. Average age 53
3. Income more than \$60,000 (According to 2005 ITRR profiles, 37% earn less and 63% earn more.
4. More than 60% have no college education.
5. Spend an average of 4.56 night in the state
6. Average group size 2.46 people
7. Primarily travel with family members.

### **Interests/Attractions**

- Driving for pleasure and viewing scenery
- Viewing wildlife
- Yellowstone Park
- Exploring new places
- Relaxing, escaping routine, not rushing
- Nature photography
- Learning new things
- Shopping
- Visiting historic sites
- Visiting friends and relatives

- **B. International Travelers**

1. Younger demographics
2. Travel in groups
3. Reasons for coming include special events, Glacier and Yellowstone Park, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and scenery.
4. Travel mostly by air.
5. More affluent, better educated
6. Interests include Western history, watchable wildlife and photography

- **C. Mature Adults comprised of two subcategories; Active Empty Nesters and Mature Adults**

Active Empty nesters 50+

1. By 2010, 1/3 of the U.S. population will be age 50+
2. Over 30% of the nation's 78 million baby boomers are Empty Nesters.
3. Possess a youthful outlook on life and travel ("50 is the new 30")

4. Prefer activities such as camping, hiking, photography and wildlife viewing

**Mature Adults**

1. Primarily married couples
2. Median age of 62
3. 60% are retired
4. Average household income of \$60,000+
5. A portion travel by motor home
6. Differ from Active Empty Nesters in that they prefer to look rather than do

- **D. Business travelers**

1. Younger demographic, 25-49, most are male
2. Travel by air into Billings Airport
3. Use Rental cars
4. Stay an average of 6.2 nights, mostly in hotel or motels
5. About 25% are on their first trip to Montana
6. Most enjoyed scenery, visiting friends, friendly people, mountains and Glacier National Park
7. Least enjoyed weather, roads, prices, crowds, traffic and rest areas
8. Reasons for coming: scenery, relatives and special events
9. Interests include Western history, watchable wildlife and photography

- **E. Group Tours**

1. Travel with motor coach group
2. Large percent are retirees
3. Visit historical sites
4. View wildlife
5. Enjoy special events
6. Enjoy Photography

- **F. Eco- and Geo Tourists**

1. Interested in preserving the pristine nature of Montana's landscape.
2. Are looking for things they can't see in their own communities.
3. Are "low-impact, high-value" travelers.
4. Are interested in historical and cultural events and sites.

## **MARKETING METHODS**

Media tools used to reach the goals listed above may include:

**Print advertising**

- Magazine ads designed and placed to reach the Custer Country destination audiences and to coordinate with editorial coverage or advertorial copy whenever possible
- Collateral pieces:
  - ✓ Custer Country Vacation Guide
  - ✓ Montana Dinosaur Trail Brochure

- ✓ Southeast Montana Birding Trail
- ✓ Loop tour maps of Custer Country

#### **Public Relations**

- Media guides and kits
- Advertorial/editorial coverage in magazines
- Press releases prepared by Custer Country Executive Director
- Print and electronic story placement
- FAM tours for travel writers, TV and radio producers and photographers
- Travel Montana's internet site
- Custer Country's internet site
- PR Plan prepared by the Executive Director
- Photos supplied to magazines, newspapers, and other media groups by Custer Country, Travel Montana and other contributors
- Maintenance and collection of internet links for travelers

#### **Outdoor**

- Billboards
- Highway signage for attractions, events and visitors centers
- Rest stop signage

#### **Website**

Continue to update and improve our website through the addition of new pages and interactive functions.

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Toll free line to call center
- Events promotion and brochures through our Cooperative Marketing Program
- Consumer trade shows

## CUSTER COUNTRY FISCAL '09 BED TAX BUDGET WORKSHEET

### Marketing Support

Admin (20% max.)	79378	
Opportunity (10% max.)	50763	
Joint Ventures	1300	
TAC meetings	4000	
Cooperative Mktg (20% max.)	15000	
<b>MARKETING SUPPORT TOTAL</b>		150441
<b>LOOP TOUR MAP REPRINT</b>	2000	2000
<b>SUPERHOST PROGRAM FUNDING</b>	1000	1000
<b>CONSUMER ADVERTISING</b>		
Ad Placement	133000	
Montana Travel Planner	3000	
welcome!Visitors	6290	
CONSUMER AD PRODUCTION	11500	
<b>TOTAL CONSUMER AD</b>		153790
<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>		
'09 Custer Country Guide	115000	
<b>TOTAL PUBLICATIONS</b>		115000
<b>E-NEWSLETTER</b>	7750	7750
<b>INTERNET SITE DESIGN/MAINTENANCE</b>	18000	18000
<b>TELEMARKETING/FULFILLMENT</b>		
U.S. Postal Svc. (Bulk)	12000	
UPS	700	
Billings Chamber	3000	
<b>Distribution Service (Cert. Folder)</b>	3000	
<b>MARS Stout</b>	10000	
<b>Envelopes and Supplies</b>	200	
<b>Small Chambers</b>	1000	
<b>TOTAL FULFILLMENT</b>		29900
<b>PUBLICITY</b>		
Public Relations	10000	
FAMS Expense	4000	
<b>TOTAL PUBLICITY</b>		14000
<b>WARRIOR TRAIL</b>	8000	8000
<b>MARKETING PLAN RETREAT</b>	1750	1750
<b>VIC ASSISTANCE</b>	5000	5000
<b>BILLBOARDS</b>	1000	1000
<b>TRADE SHOWS</b>	10000	10000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	517631	517631
<b>95% of Projected '08 collections</b>	398,689	

<b>Uncommitted Funds on hand</b>	40000
<b>Anticipated '08 carryover</b>	25000
<b>Rollover</b>	53942
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE \$</b>	517,631

In the event that revenue collected decreases by 10%, we will eliminate programs that have not been completed or cut each category by a like amount.

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name LOOP TOUR MAP REPRINT

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

X Final

\_\_\_\_ Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. **Custer Country and the Miles City Chamber of Commerce partnered in fiscal '08 to print and distribute a pocket-sized map that featured day trips with historic, scenic or topical themes for use by motorcyclists and motorists who wanted to fill extra time in their travel schedules. The loops each start at cities along the Interstate but take the traveler through small towns that feature unique attractions or landmarks. These maps proved to be very popular and we wish to reprint it, either independently or in cooperation with another public or private entity.**

**The map would be distributed at convenience stores, VICs, car rental agencies, motorcycle rental shops and other businesses where drivers could access them. It would be a 5-1/2" X 8-1/2" piece, single-folded to 4-1/4" X 5-1/2" pocket size. We have budgeted \$2000 for this project. We will print 10,000 minimum.**

Objectives

### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.
7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

### GOALS

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
8. To promote the historical significance of the region, especially the history and legend of George Custer and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the Clark on the Yellowstone Trail.
12. To work cooperatively with other CVBs and Tourism Regions, State and Federal agencies and through public/private partnerships.
14. Use regionalized maps and signs to aid travelers in finding the attractions and sites in Custer Country.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goal1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**

1.1a- Expand partnerships with tourism businesses/attractions as co-op partners..

Detail pages attached Yes

**CUSTER COUNTRY  
LOOP TOUR MAP REPRINT**

	State Tourism Funds		Partner Funds		Total
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:					
DESIGN	\$300	+	\$300	=	\$600
PRINTING	\$1,200	+	\$1,200	=	\$2,400
DISTRIBUTION	\$500	+	\$500	=	\$1,000
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL	\$2,000		\$2,000		\$4,000

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name \_\_CUSTER COUNTRY\_\_

Project Name \_\_SUPERHOST FUNDING\_\_

Application Completed by \_\_JIM SCHAEFER\_\_

Approval Requested

\_\_X\_\_ Final

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. SuperHost has proven to be a valuable tool for Custer Country's constituents by providing focused training in customer service at an affordable price. Chambers of Commerce, schools, VICs and private businesses have taken advantage of the program and Custer Country has not only supported the core program but has also provided scholarships from private funds so high schools can provide training for Juniors and Seniors at no cost

Objectives

### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.
7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

### GOALS

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
2. To provide economic benefit from tourism to the cities, towns and non-profit agencies in Custer Country and Montana. This will include aiding in the creation of more and better-paying jobs in tourism through increased tourism.
3. To assist towns, cities, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include cooperative marketing programs, VIC assistance, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.
5. To educate the general public, including those who live in Custer Country, about the structure and importance of tourism regions in Montana, and the economic impact tourism and recreation have on the state.
6. To work with local and state government agencies to help improve existing tourism infrastructure and work on planning new visitor destinations and attractions within the

Custer Country region. These will include advice on placement and promotion of camp sites, motels and recreational facilities and rest areas.

7. To enhance the experiences of visitors by providing training for front-line employees in Custer Country through Super Host and other programs that teach front-line personnel how to inform and serve tourists.

8. To promote the historical significance of the region, especially the history and legend of George Custer and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the Clark on the Yellowstone Trail.

9. To encourage Custer Country visitors to visit the smaller towns and participate in the local events of these smaller towns that they haven't been to before.

10. To encourage travelers to increase their total time in Custer Country, thereby creating a greater economic impact on the region.

12. To work cooperatively with other CVBs and Tourism Regions, State and Federal agencies and through public/private partnerships.

13. To publish and promote the newly-created Warrior Trail through cooperation with the communities lying along the trail and the State of South Dakota, who will soon consider extending the trail into their state.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

❖ **Goa1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**

1.3c- Conduct educational tourism workshops, presentations, and webinars.

1.4c- Provide advanced training for all VICs, including regional familiarization tours.

Detail pages attached Yes

**CUSTER COUNTRY  
SUPERHOST SUPPORT**

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:</b>					
SUPERHOST TRAINERS	\$1,000	+	\$0	=	\$1,000
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$1,000</b>

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name \_\_CUSTER COUNTRY\_\_

Project Name \_\_CONSUMER ADVERTISING\_\_

Application Completed by \_\_JIM SCHAEFER\_\_

Approval Requested

\_\_X\_\_ Final

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

**Consumer advertising is vital to promoting Custer Country and our efforts to find niches and broader advertising venues have been successful in the past. We will continue to search out new advertising opportunities while maintaining relationships with those publications that have proved beneficial to us in the past. Additionally, we will endeavor to create more public/private and region/CVB/TM partnerships in an attempt to stretch and leverage our advertising dollars. These efforts include seeking opportunities in print, radio, television and internet venues. Our budget for this project is \$153790.**

Objectives

Include the objectives from the narrative portion of your marketing plan that support this project. All of Custer Country's objectives will be addressed by our Consumer Ads project.

### **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
2. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.
3. Increase web "hits" by 25%.
4. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.
5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.
6. Increase the value of press coverage to \$50000 through advertorial and editorial submissions to regional and national publications.
7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project. The following portions of our Marketing Plan support this project.

### **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through

the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.

8. To promote the historical significance of the region, especially the history and legend of George Custer and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the Clark on the Yellowstone Trail.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goa1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**
- ❖ **1.1e- Enhance tracking/reporting and ROI from state, regional, and CVB advertising.**
- ❖ **Goal 10: Build an effective “team” to implement the Strategic Plan and report results.**
- 10.2- Create public/private/tribal partnerships for cooperative project**

**implementation**

You may put additional information on the back if necessary.

**Detail pages attached Yes**

<b>CONSUMER ADVERTISING</b>	
<b>BUDGET REQUEST</b>	
<b>Ad Placement</b>	<b>133000</b>
Montana Travel Planner	3000
welcome!Visitors	6290
CONSUMER AD	
PRODUCTION(Pro. Svcs.)	11500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>153790</b>

## PUBLICATIONS BEING CONSIDERED FOR CONSUMER AD PLACEMENTS IN FISCAL '09

Good Housekeeping  
Reader's Digest  
History Channel  
Midwest Living  
Discover America  
Packaged Travel Insider  
Audubon  
Nat'l Geo Traveler  
Northwest Travel Magazine  
AAA Tour Book  
AAA Home and Away  
Western Journey  
Birders World Magazine  
Travel 50  
Camping Life  
Trailer Life  
True West  
Field and Stream  
Highways  
Motor Home  
Shoot! Magazine  
99 Things to do in Yellowstone Country (Yellowstone International)  
Eastmans' Hunting Journal  
Montana Sporting Journal  
Midwest Vacation Guide (newspaper insert)  
American History  
Wild West  
Sunset Magazine  
Budget Travel  
Travel + Leisure  
Canadian Cowboy Country Magazine  
AARP  
Seattle Metropolitan  
Portland Monthly  
Texas Monthly  
Thunder Press  
Quick Throttle

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name PUBLICATIONS-CUSTER COUNTRY VACATION GUIDE

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

X Final

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

**The Custer Country Vacation Guide continues to be a popular and useful piece for visitors and those who are contemplating a visit to the area. The 4-color, 132-page glossy guide contains useful information about the larger and small towns in Custer Country along with a state map, a calendar of events for the region and information about hunting, fishing, bird-watching, day-trips and other recreational pursuits in our region. Representatives of Certified Folder in Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota tell us that our guides are taken from the shelves more quickly than most other publications of its type. In response to our having run out of guides in November last year, we increased our printing run to 140,000 copies in fiscal '08. We will determine whether a further increase is needed in fiscal '09 as a result of how long these last. Our total bed tax budget for the project is \$115,000 for production, printing and shipment of the guides.**

Objectives

Include the objectives from the narrative portion of your marketing plan that support this project.

### **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
2. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.
5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.
6. Increase the value of press coverage to \$50000 through advertorial and editorial submissions to regional and national publications.
7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

**This project supports all of the portions of our marketing plan, but most specifically the following:**

### **TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS**

Our target demographics are based upon 2005 ITRR statistics for non-resident visitors to Custer Country, inquiry statistics and successful ad campaigns from previous years. We have targeted five major demographic groups as follows:

- **A. Leisure Travelers- primary 25 – 75 years old**

1. Travel by car
2. Average age 53
3. Income more than \$60,000 (According to 2005 ITRR profiles, 37% earn less and 63% earn more.
4. More than 60% have no college education.
5. Spend an average of 4.56 night in the state
6. Average group size 2.46 people
7. Primarily travel with family members.

**Interests/Attractions**

- Driving for pleasure and viewing scenery
- Viewing wildlife
- Yellowstone Park
- Exploring new places
- Relaxing, escaping routine, not rushing
- Nature photography
- Learning new things
- Shopping
- Visiting historic sites
- Visiting friends and relatives

- **F. Eco- and Geo Tourists**

1. Interested in preserving the pristine nature of Montana's landscape.
2. Are looking for things they can't see in their own communities.
3. Are "low-impact, high-value" travelers.
4. Are interested in historical and cultural events and sites.

**Miscellaneous Marketing Methods**

- Toll free line to call center
- Events promotion and brochures through our Cooperative Marketing Program
- Consumer trade shows
- Custer Country Guide

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goal1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**

**Detail pages attached    Yes    No**

**CUSTER COUNTRY  
PUBLICATIONS- CUSTER COUNTRY VACATION  
GUIDE**

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:</b>					
Editing	\$4,999	+	\$6,000	=	\$10,999
Production and Design	\$4,999	+	\$1,500	=	\$6,499
Layout	\$4,999	+	\$1,500	=	\$6,499
Printing and delivery	\$99,753	+	\$0	=	\$99,753
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$114,750</b>		<b>\$9,000</b>		<b>\$123,750</b>

<b>MARKETING/ADVERTISING:</b>					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

<b>TRAVEL:</b>					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

<b>OTHER:</b>					
UPS/Fedex	\$150	+	\$0	=	\$150
Postage	\$100	+	\$0	=	\$100
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$250</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$250</b>

---



---

<b>REGION/CVB</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>				
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$115,000</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>\$9,000</b>	<b>= \$124,000</b>
					<b>0</b>

## **PRINTED MATERIALS**

Publication\_\_**CUSTER COUNTRY VACATION GUIDE**\_\_ Quantity\_\_**Up to 150,000**

Size\_\_8.25" X 10.75"\_\_\_\_\_

Ad Sales (Yes or No)\_\_\_\_\_ Yes\_\_\_\_\_ Percentage \_\_40%\_\_\_\_\_

Distribution Plan (areas & method)\_\_\_\_\_National and International via MARS Stout, Certified Folder, Chambers of Commerce, VICs, Executive Director, UPS, U.S. Mail\_\_\_\_\_

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name E-NEWSLETTER

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

  X   Final

       Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. **Our newly-launched E-newsletter has received excellent comments and we will continue to issue new ones at least quarterly and when events and breaking news warrants. We currently have over 1200 subscribers and we hope to develop a broader base of readers as we improve the quality and content of the newsletters. Through the dissemination of this E-newsletter, we hope to increase traffic to our website and thereby generate the desire to visit our region.**

Objectives from the narrative portion of your marketing plan that support this project.

### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
3. Increase web "hits" by 25%.
4. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

### GOALS

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

1.4d- Use technology to enhance visitor information and marketing efforts.

Detail pages attached    Yes

#### CUSTER COUNTRY E-NEWSLETTER

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:</b>					
Compilation, collating and	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
organization of subscriber	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
lists, transfer of content to	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
website, purchase of email	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
addresses.	\$7,750	+	\$0	=	\$7,750
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,750</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$7,750</b>

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name INTERNET SITE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

X Final

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

**Our Internet Site continues to attract visitors due to our consumer ads and PR programs, in addition to word of mouth. With ever-increasing numbers of potential visitors planning their trips via the internet, it is important that we continue to add pages, upkeep our “Press Room” section and continue our E-newsletter. Our site is accessible via several means: CusterCountry.org, .com, .net, .biz and via the original Custer.VisitMT.com. Our site is hosted by Travel Montana and our marketing firm works closely with TM’s staff to ensure compatibility and adherence to TM’s requirements. We hope to incorporate elements of viral marketing, webcasting, blogging and other new technologies to our website during the fiscal year.**

Objectives

### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

2. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
3. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.
4. Increase web “hits” by 25%.
5. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.
6. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

#### **Marketing Methods**

##### **Website**

Continue to update and improve our website through the addition of new pages and interactive functions.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goa1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**
- ❖ 1.4d- Use technology to enhance visitor information and marketing efforts.

Detail pages attached Yes

**CUSTER COUNTRY  
INTERNET SITE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE**

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: CYNROC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</b>					
DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE	\$18,000	+	\$0	=	\$18,000
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$18,000</b>

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name TELEMARKETING/FULFILLMENT

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

X Final

       Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

**Telemarketing and Fulfillment will again be handled by several means. The first is by purchasing the services of MARS-Stout, who will provide bulk mailing of our Custer Country Guide as the result of inquiries coming to them via our website, our consumer ads, leads received from our partners, telephone requests and those acquired at travel and trade shows. MARS-Stout will also collate and report on the numbers of leads received from each source on a monthly basis, providing comparable numbers from previous year(s). We also use the services of a UPS shipping point in Hardin, MT when case lots are requested.**

**In addition, our guides and other regional information is distributed via Certified Folder from warehouses in Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming.**

**Custer Country's Executive Director distributes guides to those areas not served by Certified Folder in eastern Montana.**

**Custer Country also reimburses the Billings Chamber of Commerce and other smaller Chambers for mailing guides as a result of inquiries made directly to those Chambers.**

**This year's budget for telemarketing and fulfillment is \$29900.**

Objectives

Include the objectives from the narrative portion of your marketing plan that support this project.

### **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

3. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.

### **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

### **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.

By providing reliable and timely distribution of our guides and other printed materials, our telemarketing/fulfillment project will also help to correct some of the weaknesses noted in our marketing plan, including:

#### **WEAKNESSES**

1. **Perceptions.** Many visitors are burdened with the mistaken impression that all of Montana looks like Glacier or Yellowstone National Parks. While these two world-famous National Parks are a definite draw to Montanans, the images potential visitors see of them don't prepare them for the equally beautiful landscapes that can be found in the eastern portions of the state. Indeed, visitors often are awe-stricken by the colorful geological formations and the sandstone faces and figures that seem to have been carved in the sandstone hills of Custer Country.

3. **Lack of understanding of the region's historic importance.** Many people are unaware of the important role Custer Country has played in U.S. history. Beginning with its acquisition in the Louisiana Purchase to the importance of the Battle of the Little Big Horn and continuing today with the role the region plays in filling the energy needs of the Nation, Custer Country's impact on history is largely unknown or misunderstood.

Even those who claim to know American History are sometimes unaware of the extent of Capt. William Clark's exploration and research in the Yellowstone Valley during the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806. Custer Country has expended considerable time and funds into helping to improve its importance in this historic trek.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goa1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**

**Detail pages attached    Yes**

**Budget is shown below:**

#### **TELEMARKETING/FULFILLMENT**

U.S. Postal Svc. (Bulk)	12000	
UPS	700	
Billings Chamber	3000	
<b>Distribution Service (Cert. Folder)</b>	3000	
<b>MARS Stout</b>	10000	
<b>Envelopes and Supplies</b>	200	
<b>Small Chambers</b>	1000	
<b>TOTAL FULFILLMENT</b>		<b>29900</b>

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name PUBLICITY

MARKETING PERSONNEL/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

☒ Final

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. **Public relations duties were taken over in fiscal '08 by the Executive Director due to the lack of output by the firm we had hired. We wish to continue that arrangement again in fiscal '09. The requested budget is \$14000. The following duties would be performed:**

- **Preparation of press releases about events, attractions and news in Custer Country. These press releases would be distributed to newspapers, magazines and e-zines regionally, nationally and internationally through a contact list that is continually expanded.**
- **Plan and direct FAM tours for qualified journalists.**
- **Attend meetings of Chambers of Commerce, civic organizations and municipal groups to explain the role of Custer Country in enhancing economic development through tourism in the region.**
- **Act as a contact person for news organizations magazines and other publications when information on Custer Country is requested.**
- **Coordinate press releases with the Consumer Ads that run by Custer Country and with the CusterCountry.com website.**
- **Attend trade and travel shows to distribute literature and to encourage visitation to the region.**
- **Market and "sell" Custer Country to potential visitors from the U.S. and foreign countries.**
- **Provide photographs for entities to use in promotional materials from the Custer Country archives and Travel Montana sources.**
- **Work with CVBs and regions in the state to promote Montana as a destination.**
- **Work on the development of a brand image for Custer Country.**

### Objectives

1. **Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.**
2. **Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.**
3. **Increase web "hits" by 25%.**
4. **Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.**
5. **Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.**
6. **Increase the value of press coverage to \$50000 through advertorial and editorial submissions to regional and national publications.**
7. **Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.**

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

## **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.
5. To educate the general public, including those who live in Custer Country, about the structure and importance of tourism regions in Montana, and the economic impact tourism and recreation have on the state.
8. To promote the historical significance of the region, especially the history and legend of George Custer and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the Clark on the Yellowstone Trail.
9. To encourage Custer Country visitors to visit the smaller towns and participate in the local events of these smaller towns that they haven't been to before.
10. To encourage travelers to increase their total time in Custer Country, thereby creating a greater economic impact on the region.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goal 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history (historic sites, museum, art, music, etc.)**
  - 4.1a- Use historic/cultural attractions as venues for conferences, events and seminars.
- ❖ **Goal 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services for target customer markets.**
  - 5.1c- Encourage use of Made/Grown in MT products by restaurants, markets, retailers, etc.
  - 5.2a- Distribute assistance information via tourism meetings, web sited, newsletters, etc.

**Detail pages attached    Yes**

**CUSTER COUNTRY  
PUBLICITY**

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:</b>					
PUBLIC RELATIONS SALARY	\$8,500	+	\$0	=	\$8,500
FAM TOURS	\$3,000	+	\$0	=	\$3,000
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,500</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$11,500</b>

<b>MARKETING/ADVERTISING:</b>					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

<b>TRAVEL:</b>					
PERSONAL CAR	\$700	+	\$0	=	\$700
Commercial Transportation	\$1,000	+	\$0	=	\$1,000
Lodging	\$300	+	\$0	=	\$300
Vehicle Rental	\$500	+	\$0	=	\$500
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$2,500</b>

<b>OTHER:</b>					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

---



---

<b>REGION/CVB</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name\_\_CUSTER COUNTRY\_\_\_\_\_

Project Name\_\_FAMS\_\_\_\_\_

Application Completed by\_\_JIM SCHAEFER\_\_\_\_\_

Approval Requested

\_\_\_\_Final

\_\_X\_\_Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

**Custer Country understands the importance of independent press coverage regionally, nationally and internationally. For this reason, we plan to organize at least three FAM tours with qualified writes from outside the Custer Country Region. These FAMs will either be independent, cooperative with Travel Montana, or in partnership with other regions. The preliminary budget for this project is \$4000. Project details will be submitted to Audits and Apps. for final approval at a later date.**

Objectives

1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
2. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.
3. Increase web “hits” by 25%.
4. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.
5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.
6. Increase the value of press coverage to \$50000 through advertorial and editorial submissions to regional and national publications.
7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

**This project is designed to help publicize the Strengths outlined in the narrative portion of our marketing plan and to help address the Weaknesses.**

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goal1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**

1.1a- Expand partnerships with tourism businesses/attractions as co-op partners..

1.1c- Attend consumer travel shows targeting high value, low impact visitors.

1.1d- Continue marketing to international travelers

- 1.1e- Enhance tracking/reporting and ROI from state, regional, and CVB advertising.
- 1.2d- Target travel media to increase visibility of MT as a leisure travel destination.
- 1.3a- Host an annual marketing plan meeting to coordinate the marketing planning process.
- 1.3b- Implement the new Montana tourism brand.
- 1.3c- Conduct educational tourism workshops, presentations, and webinars.
- 1.4b- Establish criteria for officially-designated visitor information sites statewide.
- 1.4c- Provide advanced training for all VICs, including regional familiarization tours.
- 1.4d- Use technology to enhance visitor information and marketing efforts.
- 1.4e- Expand displays of MT destination/products at all visitor locations statewide.

**Detail pages attached      No**

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name\_\_CUSTER COUNTRY\_\_\_\_\_

Project Name\_\_WARRIOR TRAIL PROJECT\_\_\_\_\_

Application Completed by\_\_JIM SCHAEFER\_\_\_\_\_

Approval Requested

☒ Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

**At the 2008 Montana legislative session, Highway 212 was designated as “The Warrior Trail,” in honor of the Native American and U.S. Cavalry combatants of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the settlers who fought to settle the area in southeast Montana which includes the Powder River Basin and the area that takes in the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservations and the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. This designation is also being considered for the same highway in South Dakota, which will connect Mt. Rushmore National Park with the Little Bighorn Battlefield.**

**The funding requested would aid in the development of a website for the Warrior Trail, along with signage, brochures, billboards, posters and advertising to introduce the trail and its important history. The funding requested is \$8,000. Custer Country is also providing private funds for the effort. We will be partnering with the Powder River Chamber of Commerce and the Highway 212 Cutacross committee of that Chamber and we hope to include both Mount Rushmore National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield National as partners. Other possible partners would be the State of South Dakota and the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Nations.**

Objectives

### **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.**
- 2. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.**
- 3. Increase web “hits” by 25%.**
- 4. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.**
- 5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.**
- 6. Increase the value of press coverage to \$50000 through advertorial and editorial submissions to regional and national publications.**
- 7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.**

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

## **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
2. To provide economic benefit from tourism to the cities, towns and non-profit agencies in Custer Country and Montana. This will include aiding in the creation of more and better-paying jobs in tourism through increased tourism.
3. To assist towns, cities, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include cooperative marketing programs, VIC assistance, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.
6. To work with local and state government agencies to help improve existing tourism infrastructure and work on planning new visitor destinations and attractions within the Custer Country region. These will include advice on placement and promotion of camp sites, motels and recreational facilities and rest areas.
8. To promote the historical significance of the region, especially the history and legend of George Custer and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the Clark on the Yellowstone Trail.
9. To encourage Custer Country visitors to visit the smaller towns and participate in the local events of these smaller towns that they haven't been to before.
10. To encourage travelers to increase their total time in Custer Country, thereby creating a greater economic impact on the region.
11. To have a strong internet presence and to keep the information on it current and entertaining.
12. To work cooperatively with other CVBs and Tourism Regions, State and Federal agencies and through public/private partnerships.
13. To publish and promote the newly-created Warrior Trail through cooperation with the communities lying along the trail and the State of South Dakota, who will soon consider extending the trail into their state.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ Goal 2: Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation.
- ❖ Goal 3: Address management and access issues for sustainable recreation on private, state, and federal lands.
- ❖ Goal 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history (historic sites, museum, art, music, etc.)
  - 4.1a- Use historic/cultural attractions as venues for conferences, events and seminars.
- ❖ Goal 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services for target customer markets.

5.1c- Encourage use of Made/Grown in MT products by restaurants, markets, retailers, etc.

Detail pages attached Yes

CUSTER COUNTRY  
WARRIOR TRAIL PROJECT

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:</b>					
Web Site Development	\$2,000	+	\$1,000	=	\$3,000
Signage	\$2,000	+	\$1,000	=	\$3,000
Billboards	\$2,000	+	\$500	=	\$2,500
Brochures, Rack Cards	\$1,500	+	\$500	=	\$2,000
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>		<b>\$3,000</b>		<b>\$10,500</b>

<b>MARKETING/ADVERTISING:</b>					
Newspaper, Radio	\$500	+	\$1,000	=	\$1,500
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500</b>		<b>\$1,000</b>		<b>\$1,500</b>

<b>TRAVEL:</b>					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

<b>OTHER:</b>					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

<b>REGION/CVB</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						

## **Application for projects over \$500**

Organization Name \_\_CUSTER COUNTRY\_\_

Project Name \_\_MARKETING PLAN RETREAT\_\_

Application Completed by \_\_JIM SCHAEFER\_\_

### **Approval Requested**

\_\_X\_\_ Final

       Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

**Given the large geographic area covered by Custer Country and the amount of work that goes into the Marketing Plan, together with the difficulty of conducting business over such a vast area, we are requesting funding for a Marketing Plan Retreat. This retreat would be an opportunity to get all of our Marketing Plan Partners in one place to sit down in a relaxed atmosphere to brainstorm and look for better ways to promote Custer Country. This is something that we have never done before, but we know that it works well in other regions. The funds would also be used to send the Executive Director and a Cynroc representative to the planned Market Plan Partners meeting. The funding we are requesting is \$1750.**

### **Objectives**

**In addition to the measurable objectives outlined in the narrative portion of Custer Country's Marketing Plan, we also feel that such a retreat will enable us to find more and better ways to market our region.**

### **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.**
- 2. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.**
- 3. Increase web "hits" by 25%.**
- 4. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.**
- 5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.**
- 6. Increase the value of press coverage to \$50000 through advertorial and editorial submissions to regional and national publications.**
- 7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.**

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

### **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
2. To provide economic benefit from tourism to the cities, towns and non-profit agencies in Custer Country and Montana. This will include aiding in the creation of more and better-paying jobs in tourism through increased tourism.
3. To assist towns, cities, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include cooperative marketing programs, VIC assistance, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.
5. To educate the general public, including those who live in Custer Country, about the structure and importance of tourism regions in Montana, and the economic impact tourism and recreation have on the state.

This project would also help to address some of Custer Country's weaknesses, as identified in the Marketing Plan.

## **WEAKNESSES**

1. **Perceptions.** Many visitors are burdened with the mistaken impression that all of Montana looks like Glacier or Yellowstone National Parks. While these two world-famous National Parks are a definite draw to Montanans, the images potential visitors see of them don't prepare them for the equally beautiful landscapes that can be found in the eastern portions of the state. Indeed, visitors often are awe-stricken by the colorful geological formations and the sandstone faces and figures that seem to have been carved in the sandstone hills of Custer Country.

3. **Lack of understanding of the region's historic importance.** Many people are unaware of the important role Custer Country has played in U.S. history. Beginning with its acquisition in the Louisiana Purchase to the importance of the Battle of the Little Big Horn and continuing today with the role the region plays in filling the energy needs of the Nation, Custer Country's impact on history is largely unknown or misunderstood.

Even those who claim to know American History are sometimes unaware of the extent of Capt. William Clark's exploration and research in the Yellowstone Valley during the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806. Custer Country has expended considerable time and funds into helping to improve its importance in this historic trek.

5. **Misunderstanding of the recreational opportunities in Custer Country.** There is a misconception among some sportsmen that hunting and fishing areas are over-crowded or inaccessible. This attitude is caused by limited problems that have been experienced by a few, but which have little basis in fact. The Big Horn River, known as a Blue-Ribbon trout stream does, indeed, get congested sometimes, but usually creates ample opportunities for serious anglers. The Big Horn is also the subject of a two-state battle over stream flows controlled by the Yellowtail Dam near Ft. Smith. However, Tongue River Reservoir, the

Yellowstone River, Bighorn Canyon and smaller bodies of water like Sandstone Reservoir and Baker Lake offer great opportunities but have yet to be discovered by many.

Hunting access is becoming problematic, as well, with the increasing number of properties being bought by out-of-state buyers and then closed to recreational activities. (The recent acquisition of previously privately-held land in Custer Country by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation should help provide new recreational and hunting opportunities, however.) These properties are sometimes adjacent to public lands that are only accessible through these private tracts, causing many of the public areas to be closed to such activities. While programs like Block Management and easement purchases are helping to stave off these problems to some degree, they are going to continue to need constant monitoring and remediation

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

❖ **Goal 9: Increase funding to maintain sustainable tourism and recreation.**

**9.1- Seek increases in state funding for targeted tourism marketing/programs/facilities.**

**9.2- Foster opportunities to pool public and private marketing dollars.**

**9.3- Enhance funding for region and CVB marketing efforts.**

Detail pages attached Yes

**CUSTER COUNTRY  
MARKETING PLAN RETREAT**

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>TRAVEL:</b>					
Lodging	\$400	+	\$0	=	\$400
Meals	\$400	+	\$0	=	\$400
Mileage	\$750	+	\$0	=	\$,750
Supplies	\$200	+	\$0	=	\$200
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1750</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$1750</b>

<b>REGION/CVB</b>	<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1750</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>\$1750</b>
-------------------	----------------------	---------------	----------	------------	----------	---------------

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name\_\_CUSTER COUNTRY\_\_\_\_\_

Project Name\_\_VIC ASSISTANCE\_\_\_\_\_

Application Completed by\_\_JIM SCHAEFER\_\_\_\_\_

Approval Requested

\_\_\_\_Final

\_\_X\_\_Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. **This project is intended to enable underfunded VICs in Custer Country to hire employees who will be used to extend hours of operation and/or days of operation. It is a matching funds option for non-profit organizations to hire part-time employees who will provide travel services to the traveling public. These employees will be trained to encourage travelers to spend more time in their communities by alerting them to events and attractions in those communities. The proposed budget for this project is \$4000.**

### Objectives

Include the objectives from the narrative portion of your marketing plan that support this project.

### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

1. **Increase Bed Tax collections in the region by 5%.**
2. **Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.**
5. **Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.**
7. **Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.**

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

**3. Lack of understanding of the region's historic importance.** Many people are unaware of the important role Custer Country has played in U.S. history. Beginning with its acquisition in the Louisiana Purchase to the importance of the Battle of the Little Big Horn and continuing today with the role the region plays in filling the energy needs of the Nation, Custer Country's impact on history is largely unknown or misunderstood.

Even those who claim to know American History are sometimes unaware of the extent of Capt. William Clark's exploration and research in the Yellowstone Valley during the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806. Custer Country has expended considerable time and funds into helping to improve its importance in this historic trek.

**5. Misunderstanding of the recreational opportunities in Custer Country.** There is a misconception among some sportsmen that hunting and fishing areas are over-crowded or inaccessible. This attitude is caused by limited problems that have been experienced by a few, but which have little basis in fact. The Big Horn River, known as a Blue-Ribbon trout stream does, indeed, get congested sometimes, but usually creates ample opportunities for serious anglers. The Big Horn is also the subject of a two-state battle over stream flows controlled by the Yellowtail Dam near Ft. Smith. However, Tongue River Reservoir, the Yellowstone River, Bighorn Canyon and smaller bodies of water like Sandstone Reservoir and Baker Lake offer great opportunities but have yet to be discovered by many.

Hunting access is becoming problematic, as well, with the increasing number of properties being bought by out-of-state buyers and then closed to recreational activities. (The recent acquisition of previously privately-held land in Custer Country by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation should help provide new recreational and hunting opportunities, however.) These properties are sometimes adjacent to public lands that are only accessible through these private tracts, causing many of the public areas to be closed to such activities. While programs like Block Management and easement purchases are helping to stave off these problems to some degree, they are going to continue to need constant monitoring and remediation.

**10. Lack of directional and informational signage.** Many of the historical sites in Custer Country are under-advertised due to Federal and State Laws and unavailability of appropriate places for billboards.

### **GOALS**

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
2. To provide economic benefit from tourism to the cities, towns and non-profit agencies in Custer Country and Montana. This will include aiding in the creation of more and better-paying jobs in tourism through increased tourism.
3. To assist towns, cities, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include cooperative marketing programs, VIC assistance, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

❖ **Goal 10: Build an effective “team” to implement the Strategic Plan and report results.**

10.2- Create public/private/tribal partnerships for cooperative project implementation.

10.4- Streamline reporting process of marketing plans/expenditures to TAC/TM by regions & CVBs.

**Detail pages attached      No**

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name BILLBOARDS

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

X Final

       Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. **We believe that billboards can play an important part in promoting Custer Country. We currently own two billboards that direct travelers to alternative routes through Custer Country instead of the Interstate through Wyoming. We wish to maintain these billboards and update them when necessary**

### Objectives

Include the objectives from the narrative portion of your marketing plan that support this project.

### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.
7. Increase traffic on two-lane roads in Custer Country by 5%.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

### GOALS

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
3. To assist towns, cities, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include cooperative marketing programs, VIC assistance, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.
9. To encourage Custer Country visitors to visit the smaller towns and participate in the local events of these smaller towns that they haven't been to before.
14. Use regionalized maps and signs to aid travelers in finding the attractions and sites in Custer Country.

### WEAKNESSES

10. Lack of directional and informational signage. Many of the historical sites in Custer Country are under-advertised due to Federal and State Laws and unavailability of appropriate places for billboards.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ Goal1.1-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.

Detail pages attached Yes

**CUSTER COUNTRY  
BILLBOARDS**

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:</b>					
VINYL FACES, STRUCTURAL	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
WORK	\$800	+	\$0	=	\$800
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$800</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$800</b>

<b>OTHER:</b>					
PROPERTY LEASES	\$200	+	\$300	=	\$500
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$200</b>		<b>\$300</b>		<b>\$500</b>

---



---

<b>REGION/CVB</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>\$300</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>\$1,300</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						

## Application for projects over \$500

Organization Name CUSTER COUNTRY

Project Name TRADE SHOWS

Application Completed by JIM SCHAEFER

Approval Requested

       Final

  X   Preliminary

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Trade shows have been an integral part of Custer Country's Marketing strategy for many years. We strive to participate in shows in areas we have successfully drawn visitors from as well as exploring new areas. Our aim is to participate in more shows this fiscal year than in previous years and we are hopeful that more of our members will be able to participate. We use the shows to distribute our Travel Guide, Birding Trail Map, Montana Maps and Travel Planners, and to drive folks to our website. The budget for this project is \$10000

Objectives

### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

1. Increase Bed Tax Collections in the region by 5%.
2. Increase attendance at events such as the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, the Little Bighorn Reenactments and Clark Days at Pompeys Pillar by 15%.
3. Increase web "hits" by 25%.
4. Increase inquiries through our call center by 10%.
5. Extend length of stay by visitors to Custer Country to the state average of 4.78 nights.

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

### GOALS

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in Custer Country.
2. To provide economic benefit from tourism to the cities, towns and non-profit agencies in Custer Country and Montana. This will include aiding in the creation of more and better-paying jobs in tourism through increased tourism.
3. To assist towns, cities, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include cooperative marketing programs, VIC assistance, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.
4. To promote events and communities through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through hosting press tours that include not only the major cities in Custer Country, but also the smaller communities and events. We also promote these communities through the calendar of events in our Custer Country Guide and on our website, which is being constantly updated.

5. To educate the general public, including those who live in Custer Country, about the structure and importance of tourism regions in Montana, and the economic impact tourism and recreation have on the state.
8. To promote the historical significance of the region, especially the history and legend of George Custer and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the Clark on the Yellowstone Trail.
9. To encourage Custer Country visitors to visit the smaller towns and participate in the local events of these smaller towns that they haven't been to before.
10. To encourage travelers to increase their total time in Custer Country, thereby creating a greater economic impact on the region.
11. To have a strong internet presence and to keep the information on it current and entertaining.
13. To publish and promote the newly-created Warrior Trail through cooperation with the communities lying along the trail and the State of South Dakota, who will soon consider extending the trail into their state.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

- ❖ **Goa1.1.-Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.**
  - 1.1a- Expand partnerships with tourism businesses/attractions as co-op partners..**
  - 1.1c- Attend consumer travel shows targeting high value, low impact visitors.**
  - 1.1d- Continue marketing to international travelers**

**Detail pages attached No**